

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

The specification has been amended to add section headings and to remove duplicative paragraphs.

The previously pending claims have been replaced with new claims. No new matter is entered by way of the new claims.

The previously pending claims were objected to. The new claims have been drafted so as to remedy the status of objection. Withdrawal of the objection is solicited.

The previously pending claims were rejected under §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The new claims have been drafted so as to avoid the stated basis for rejection under §112, second paragraph. Accordingly, withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection is solicited.

Claim 1 was rejected as anticipated by STREY DE 19835241.

Claims 2-8 were rejected as obvious over STREY.

Claims 9-11 and 19-21 were rejected as obvious over STREY in view of MONTANELLI DE 2739017.

Claims 12-14 were rejected as obvious over STREY in view of ROLLE 3,343,328.

Claims 15-18 were rejected as obvious over STREY and ROLLE in further view of MONTANELLI.

The newly-presented claims are believed to be both novel and non-obvious over the prior art, and in particular over the applied art.

The new independent claim is based on previous claims 1, 4, 5, 9, 12, 13 and 15. The remaining new claims are based upon previously pending claims. The subject matter of original claim 21 has been deleted.

In view of the subject matter incorporated into the new independent claim, the anticipation rejection is moot. Accordingly, the question is whether the claims are obvious over the applied references. For the reasons outlined below, the non-obviousness of the claims is believed to be clear. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

The block as newly claimed comprises a plurality of means for its assembly with similar blocks, said means being arranged in a characteristic fashion.

One important problem of wood blocks assemblies is that the cooperation between the blocks is often insufficiently strong and stable. Also, clearances are often met between the blocks.

To overcome this issue, the invention proposes a block having a new combination of assembling means, said assembling means also being located in a specific manner. More precisely, the assembling means comprise:

1) A pair of flanges on the upper face and a pair of grooves on the lower face for the assembly of the block by ordinary tongue and groove joint, the longitudinal axis of the flanges on the upper face and longitudinal axis of the grooves on the lower face facing each other two by two on the same vertical axis.

2) At each of its two ends, a splined tongue and groove joint, parallel to the wall facings and perpendicular to the upper and lower faces, for a symmetrical assembly at the two ends of the block.

3) For each splined tongue and groove joint, a group of two countersunk holes perpendicular to the upper face of the block, passing through the block up to its lower face and located on the axis that is parallel to the flanges and between the latter, in the same longitudinal axis as the splined tongue and groove joint.

This combination provides with a transmission of mechanical forces in all the directions of stress. Also, the combination cumulates means for suppressing any clearance or movement between two blocks. The fact that three series of means are associated enables the designer to limit the size of each series and to show and to share the forces among various portions of the block. For example, the presence of groups of two holes limits the requirement for holes of large diameter which could be regions of stress concentrations.

STREY fails to disclose the object of the claimed invention. STREY discloses a block with only a pair of flanges and a pair of grooves as introduced in point 1) above. No suggestion is given by STREY to use other assembling means. A skilled person would have considered that the means disclosed by STREY are sufficient and would not have searched for a further characteristic.

In addition, combining STREY and MONTANELLI teachings is not easily feasible. MONTANELLI fails to disclose a flange and groove cooperation so that it is different from the main features of STREY and refrains the skilled person from combining the two kinds of features.

As to ROLLE, the hole it discloses is not similar to the hole of the invention which:

- pass through the block to its lower face,
- are grouped by pairs of holes,
- are combined with splined tongue and groove joints and systems of flanges and grooves.

As to the dependent claims related to dimension selections, the applicant has determined that the mechanical strength of the blocks and of the assemblies of blocks are optimized with such dimensions.

As the references do not individually teach the features of the invention, or do not suggest modification such as

to arrive at the invention, the claims are believed to be patentable. Allowance of all the claims is solicited.

The present amendment is believed to be fully responsive to the Official Action. Entry of the amendment and allowance of all the claims is solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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